

New Guinea

January 22, 1945

My darling Mama:

Monday night – I've just finished reading a Dec. 4 issue of time: it tells about the slowness of the Leyte campaign & of how far off Luzon seemed as well as optimistically commenting on prospects on the western front in Europe. This war should teach us all to reserve our comments.

Yesterday along with Smith and Baron, I went over to my [illegible] we drove by jeep to one beach and across the other by Duck. The water was rough and the Duck bottled like a cork the entire beach & area behind it where all the troops are is deserted – The only living thing, except [illegible] was a dog which shook away among the vine clad Ammo stacks

Even the small graveyard at the bottom of the cliff had been built from the beach back through the Ammo dump to the outlying unit areas, was nearly washed away as the edge of the swamp – a few D-day sign boards still remained "P.O.L." (Petrol oil & lubricant – I think). Ammo & some E.P. marker. I saw the tree where sat the monkey that I saw on D-day – and, I [illegible] – our old sign "Peevine Ammo Dump" still stands. A colonel met us at a place near there & went over with us. We fired a forty five at some [illegible] pow pows and walked around

Lt. Baron shall be over there this week to dispose of it by dumping in the Bay & alas blowing it up about \$800,000 worth – After the 40 miles jeep ride back I ate supper and went to mass.

Not much mail lately – but most of which I have received had been from you. I am glad you are sending the Echo by air mail. Mama, I certainly enjoy your letters. They are never without exception, [illegible] even in part. I am freely lazy about writing to anyone except you sometimes I write Leo a fairly lengthy letter. I must write to Bro Duffy. Haven't heard from Bernie in a long time

Despite the fact that we have a good many troops working for us in the depot lately, work the officers have been slights – Smith is staying in the company area supervising the building of our new quarters & a basketball court for the men – I am supervising men in the Depot – Here is the way they (our Divisions – Dorsey and I call them) were employed today: Lt. Baron with two details of 7 men each & two Ducks to my old haunt as I mentioned; ten men from an ordinance composite company (renovation of Ammo) separated the cartridge cases (Brass) for shipment to [illegible] ten men packed the Brass in metal containers which they are to be shipped – 25 men paint the inner sealed containers – holding small arms Ammo – with a tar composite to prevent further deterioration – 10 men finished a nature hut type of magazine for Ammo storage and started another – 30 feet by 130 feet – framework of poles covered with a tarp – 5 men cut timber for same – 7 men and a Duck went to neighboring beach and continued the dispose of Ammo into the Bay. This morning Lou and I rode about 15 miles to a spot where this is some Jap. Ammo & looked it over preparatory to removing it. This afternoon after four I went to Base Headquarter's to the Information & Education section where I got some maps for our bulletin board & made arrangements for a Victrola & records – Spanish speaking records for some of the men who are studying Spanish through the Army Institute – and so the day passed – a fairly pleasant day

I deviated from Pageant of the Popes in order to read "Yankee Lawyer" finished it last night and shall start on the Popes tonight

I think I shall write tomorrow: I know that I write more than when I left Australia.

Mother I wish you would send me an informal financial account of the farm – total value of land – value of stock - & total amount of liabilities – all in rough figures. I always wonder about it and I've forgotten the original figures. Deducting the \$150 I checked in Australia (pretty steep spending) I should have had \$1800 in the bank and in sheep on Jan 1st – By next January 1st I should have another \$1800 via savings – thus making 3600 plus what I will make on the sheep – which, considering my eventual mustering out pay of \$300 will make the amount over \$4000 – pretty good – starting in March, I am going to send you some money monthly – At least \$15.00 a month and you are going to use it for pen money

Well mother dear its time to close. The war continues to go extremely well. The Russian drive is worth the waiting. Poor us on the Western front – we just can't seem to get moving – I still insist, however, that the west is much the harder go – and as for the theatre – I am a McArthur man from now on & hope that he continues on into China as Theatre Commander.

Only one person is next to the infinite in goodness & that person is you

Your ever, ever loving son,

John

How is Mr. Ed – I was thinking the other day about his giving me nickels in the afternoon after school in the cotton yard.